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# NRCS Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey

## Interviewer's Manual Version 4: Forestry Practices

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# Chapter 1: NRCS Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations

## Background

The Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey (CPAMS) is a reimbursable survey that the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has contracted the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to collect. A pilot study, of all four versions, was conducted in 2021. The information collected during the pilot survey conducted in Nebraska, Oregon, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania was used to make decisions going forward for a larger, national survey conducted in 2022 and 2024.

There are four different questionnaire versions for the CPAM survey:

Version 1 – Crop Practices (2022)

Version 2 – Confined Livestock Practices (2022)

Version 3 – Grazing Practices (2024)

Version 4 – Forestry Practices (2024)

The questionnaires are designed to obtain information about producer adoption of various conservation practices, past and present, participation in technical and financial assistance programs, and motivations for practice adoption or non-adoption (e.g., on-farm conservation, financial return, producer time and effort, and off-farm environmental benefits). The question format between all the versions is very similar, though the specific questions and practices are different for each version. There are some classification and demographic questions that are similar across versions to facilitate comparisons between versions.

The forestry practice survey population of interest are private forest ownerships based on the USDA Forest Service (FS) National Woodland Owner Survey. The ownership categories for this population are family forest owners and small corporate owners (owning less than 45,000 acres of forestland). FS identified forest and woodland using a process similar to June area. Public records were then used to determine contact information. The respondent may be the forest land owner or manager.

## Employer

You are an employee of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA). Work on this survey is covered by a cooperative agreement between NASDA and NASS. Introduce yourself as a NASDA employee working for the (your State) Field Office of the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

## Responsibility

Accurate information collected directly from farmers and ranchers by trained interviewers provides the best possible information. When you contact survey respondents, it is your responsibility to:

- obtain cooperation from selected operations,
- remind respondents of the confidential nature of the data,
- explain the uses of the data collected,
- collect quality data on survey items.

Once you have completed data collection, you are responsible for returning all completed questionnaires to your RFO in a timely manner and before the survey due date. Keep in mind the confidential nature of

the data you have collected. Protect the data and the respondent's personal information with utmost care and respect.

## Survey Results

There will be published highlights from the CPAM survey in October 2024. The data collected will be for research and to inform NRCS. Most operations will be using only a subset of the practices asked about in each questionnaire version. In fact, there will be some practices that are in use on only a handful of operations, making it important that we collect as many surveys as possible.

## Chapter 2 – Terms and Definitions

**Brush** – Woody plants (e.g., shrubs, trees, cacti) including invasive, noxious, or undesirable plants.

**Conservation Stewardship Program** - The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps producers or landowners build on their existing conservation efforts by providing technical and financial assistance to attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. For example, if you have been implementing forest stand improvement activities, you may decide to try an enhancement to manage for improved soil quality, understory vegetation, wildlife habitat, or regeneration of a target species like oak. Payments are annual to support ongoing improvements on the farm, as opposed to other programs that typically provide financial assistance for specific practices when the practice is completed.

**Financial Assistance** – A payment or grant that helps defray the cost of preparing a forest management or stewardship plan or installing or implementing conservation practices.

**Forest or woodland** – Includes woods, woodlots, timberland, and forests that are generally at least 1 acre in size, 120 feet wide, and have at least 10% forest cover. It also includes land where trees were removed, and trees will grow again.

**Non-timber forest products** – Refers to products that can be harvested from a forest or woodland such as medicinal plants, mushrooms, berries, landscaping plants like ferns or pine straw, or decorative products like boughs or birch bark.

**Slash** – Debris left over after logging, pruning, thinning or brush cutting; includes logs, chips, bark, branches, stumps and broken understory trees or brush.

**Technical Assistance** – Expertise or information provided to the landowner or manager that may include developing a forest management or stewardship plan or the planning, design, and layout for practices (such as forest stand improvement, tree or understory planting, wildlife structures, fences, or prescribed/controlled fire). Technical assistance does not include community workshops, internet resources, forestry shows and conventions, and information not directly specific to your land or operation.

**Weed** – non-woody plants (e.g., grasses, herbs) that are undesirable in a particular situation or location.

## Chapter 3 – Enumerator Procedures

### Questionnaire

The Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey (CPAMS) has 4 different questionnaire versions. This manual contains information for version 4, forestry practices. The questionnaire was developed in cooperation with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and is directed at finding out what conservation practices are currently being used or have been used in the past, whether technical or financial assistance was received, why operators choose to adopt the practice, and why they may have chosen to continue, expand, or discontinue the practice.

### Method of Interviewing

The Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey will use all methods of data collection, including, phone (CATI), fax, internet, personal phone interview by Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI), or in person interviews. All sampled operations receive a copy of the questionnaire through the mail, with telephone follow-up by field enumerators via CAPI and associated Data Collection Centers (DCCs). Telephone enumerators at the DCCs will utilize the Blaise CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) Instrument, which automatically delivers forms and manages call backs and appointments.

All respondents will receive a pressure sealed mailer with their individual survey code and AgCounts online reporting instructions. Any operations not responding to that mailer will receive a letter and a copy of the questionnaire in the mail. A second letter and questionnaire will be sent to respondents that have not responded approximately 3 weeks later. The respondent may choose to complete and return either questionnaire by mail or complete the questionnaire online at [agcounts.usda.gov](http://agcounts.usda.gov). If the operation reports data by either of these methods, they will become ineligible for calling through CATI or CAPI.

Some operations will be held for Regional Field Office enumeration and will be collected by telephone, mail, fax, or field phone interview.

## Burden Statement

Federal regulations require that all questionnaires used by agencies of the Federal government provide a burden statement – an estimate of the average time required to complete the questionnaire. This regulation is administered by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which has the duty of approving and overseeing all government data collection efforts. The public may respond to the Office of Management and Budget regarding any aspect of a survey.

The burden statement appears on the front page of each version of the CPAMS Questionnaire. The average time indicated on the burden statement represents the average completion time estimated for completion. If respondents ask, "How long will this take?" note the burden statement average time requirement and never directly contradict it. However, you may provide additional information, such as, "The official average for this survey is 60 minutes, but the interviews I have been doing in this area are averaging around 30 - 45 minutes."

### **SAMPLE BURDEN STATEMENT**

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. Your responses will be kept confidential and any person who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both. This survey is conducted in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018, Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435 codified in 44 U.S.C. Ch. 35 and other applicable Federal laws. For more information on how we protect your information please visit: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality>. Response to this survey is voluntary.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number is 0535-0272. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

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## Confidentiality

Reports received from individual operations remain confidential and are used for NRCS research and will be published as highlights using the information collected during the CPAMS.

It is your responsibility to inform the respondent that this is a voluntary survey and assure them their report is confidential. A respondent has the right to know under what authority the information is being collected, the purpose for the information collected, and how information about their operation will be used. See your NASDA handbook for additional information regarding confidentiality.



## Completing the Interview

Your first point of contact is the person or business name on the label. The person who is most familiar with conservation practices will be best able to provide the information that is being asked in the CPAMS questionnaire.

Encourage respondents to have any records of conservation contracts or easements on hand, or other records that involve the use of conservation practices such as written plans. Using records makes for more reliable reporting.

Make sure you are familiar with and understand the questionnaire. Review the survey letter, survey instructions, and other materials. Prepare an introduction and be prepared to answer questions about the survey purpose, uses of the data, and items on the questionnaire.

Ask questions in the order they appear on the questionnaire. Do not skip questions unless instructions printed on the questionnaire allow you to do so. Read statements and questions fully and exactly as written.

Following are examples of the type of instructions that you may find on the questionnaire.

### Enumerator Instructions

Enumerator instructions may be included with some questions. Enumerator instructions are provided to you so that you will complete the questionnaire correctly. Enumerator instructions are enclosed in square brackets. They should not be read to the respondent.

Example:

[Verify name and mailing address of this operation. Make any corrections necessary (including the correct operation name) on the label and continue.]

### “Include” and “Exclude” Statements

“Include” and “exclude” statements appear with many questions. “Include” and “exclude” statements are provided to help you and the respondent clarify the meaning of the question. Read the “include/exclude” statements so that the meaning of the question is clear.

### “Skip” Instructions

Sometimes you may encounter questions which instruct you to skip a question or section based on a particular response. Follow the “skip” instructions when they appear with questions. If the interview is being completed via CATI or CAPI, the instrument is programmed to automatically “skip” when appropriate.

**Example:**

Note that depending on the response (“Yes” or “No”), you may continue or skip to the next question or next section.

201  Yes - Go to Item 2

3  No - Complete Items 1a and 1b below, then go to Section 4 - Nutrient Management on page 9

Sometimes you will need to probe to get an adequate answer to a question, for example, when the answer isn’t precise enough or if you think the respondent didn’t understand the question. Probing is important to verify unusual data or correct misreported data. Be careful that you don’t appear to be questioning or challenging the respondent’s answers, but clarifying an answer given.

### Reference Dates

The CPAMS questionnaire asks about different reference periods such as previous year, within the last 15 years, or at any time in the past. Be sure to read the questions carefully and only refer to the date referenced for each question.

### Important Reminders

As you complete the questionnaire:

Make good notes. This is especially important when you find unusual situations.

Record your answers in whole numbers (no decimals) and pay attention to if the question is asking for acres or percentages.

### Call Back Procedures

Plan each phone call attempt for a different time of day or early evening. Use the following instructions as a guide.

#### First Attempt

If the operator or partner is not present, but is expected shortly, make an appointment to call back later or, if interviewing in person, wait for the interview. It is very important for you to keep the appointment or to call back if it cannot be kept.

If the operator or partner will not be available until after the survey is over, interview a knowledgeable person such as a spouse, son, daughter, or hired person. Try to interview the person most knowledgeable about the farming operation.

#### Follow-up Attempts

If a follow-up call is required after the first attempt, try again to interview the operator or partner. If they are still unavailable, set up an appointment if possible.

## Final Attempt

If the operation is assigned for CATI or CAPI enumeration, your supervisor will determine the number of attempts for call-backs.

## Refusals

There are always respondents reluctant to provide information and some will refuse completely. When a refusal occurs, note the reason why the operator refused. If possible, try to determine if the operation is still in business and what commodities (crops, livestock, etc.) are produced. Do not become discouraged when you get a refusal. On the next interview, continue to greet the operator with an easy, friendly manner.

## Supervision

All questions regarding data collection should be directed to your NASDA supervisor. Contact your supervisor with questions or problems as soon as they arise. Your supervisor or Regional Field Office may contact some of your respondents after you interview them as part of a Quality Check.

## Materials

Materials used in the Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey are listed below. Your supervisor is responsible for furnishing all necessary materials. Notify your supervisor if you are running low on supplies. All manuals, letters, questionnaires will be available as electronic copies.

### All Enumerators

- Interviewer's Manual
- Blank questionnaires
- Black lead pencils
- Copy of Survey Letter
- Copy of Pressure Sealed Mailer with EDR Instructions

### Field Enumerators

- CAPI iPad
- NASDA Identification Card
- Motor Vehicle Accident Report Kit
- NASDA Employee Handbook

## Survey Response Rate

A minimum 80% response rate is required by OMB and is expected from all Regional Field Offices.

## Feedback

Everyone involved in the survey is encouraged to recommend changes to clarify or improve survey materials and procedures. Forward all recommendations to the CPAMS administrator in your Regional Field Office, who will forward them to the Survey Administrator in HQ. This will be very important due to the nature of the survey and feedback is greatly welcomed.

## Chapter 4 – Operation Identification and Screening

### Operation Identification – Name and Address

**Due to the origin of this sample, the label will contain either a person or operation/business name. No partner information is available for this version.**

#### **Landowner or Manager**

The individual name listed on the label is considered the landowner or manager. The survey targets the person responsible for the day-to-day decisions for the forest or woodland.

#### **Business Name**

The business name listed on the label is considered the landowner or manager. You should ask for the person most knowledgeable about conservation programs. Record the name of the person completing the interview. This will help the Regional Field Office identify potential duplication.

#### **Target Operation**

The ‘target’ of this CPAMS survey is the sampled forest or woodland owner or manager at the address indicated. The respondent should be the person most involved in the conservation practice decision making. If all owners or managers are equally involved in the conservation practice decisions, then any one of them can respond.

#### **Name and Address Labels**

Here is an example of a questionnaire name and address label. The format of the label in your Regional Field Office may differ from this example but will contain the same basic information.

BARCO B BA BAR BARCO B BA BARCO B C	
State, POID, Tract, Survey ID numbers	
CASI Respondent Survey Code,	Strata,
Sequence # Operation Name,	District,
County	
Operator Name,	ODStatus, Supervisor,
Enumerator Address	
City, State, Zip-Zip4	

#### **Target Operation**

The ‘target’ of this CPAMS survey is going to be the sampled operation. Regardless of other operating arrangements: partnerships, multiple operations, managed operations, etc., the target will be the operation that is listed on the label and the land (owned and leased) that it operates. The respondent should be the person most involved in the conservation practice decision making. If all operators are equally involved in the conservation practice decisions, then any one of them can respond.

## Operation Target Examples

### Example 1. Individual Target Name on label and CAPI.

```
BARCO B BA BAR BARCO B BA BARCO B C
10 300123890 01 01 2315 125698 00
SURVEY CODE=10-300123891-GMX78Q 71 10000
                                20 129
DENNIS R. SCOTT                  00 307 359
12345 RIVER RD
OURTOWN DE 12590-4582
```

Operator Information Close

CONSERVATION PRACTICE ADOPTION MOTIVATIONS SURVEY

**POID:** 300348740                      **TRA:** 1    **SUB:** 1    **OP DOM:** 0  
**DCMS:** 210                              **STR:**

**LABELS:** , , , ,

**Survey Code:** 4631-75WS-HLJF

**Operator:** DENNIS R SCOTT  
12345 RIVER RD  
OURTOWN DE 12590-4582

**Operation:**

In the example above, there is no operation name listed, so the target will be Dennis R. Scott. **You should collect data for Dennis R. Scott's forest or woodland.** If Dennis is involved in more than one operation, you should collect data only for the operation for which he is the individual operator.

**Example 2. Operation Name on label and CAPI.**

```
BARCO B BA BAR BARCO B BA BARCO B C
10 300123890 01 01 2315 125698 00
SURVEY CODE=10-300123891-GMX78Q 71 10000

WINDY ACRES FARM                20 129
                                00 307 359

12345 RIVER RD
OURTOWN DE 12590-4582
```

Operator Information Close

CONSERVATION PRACTICE ADOPTION MOTIVATIONS SURVEY

**POID:** 300348740                      **TRA:** 1    **SUB:** 1    **OP DOM:** 0  
**DCMS:** 210                              **STR:**

**LABELS:** , , , ,

**Survey Code:** 4631-75WS-HLJF

**Operator:**  
12345 RIVER RD  
OURTOWN DE 12590-4582

**Operation:** WINDY ACRES FARM

In example 2, the operation name is Windy Acre Farm, so Windy Acres Farm is the target. **You should collect data only for Windy Acres Farm, and no other operations.** The respondent, you identify during the interview, may be involved in other operations, but you will want to collect data only for the land operated (owned and leased) by Windy Acres Farm.

## Chapter 5 – Questionnaire

### Face Page and Screening

On the front page, after confirming the address or making updates, are screener questions that will determine if the operation is in-scope for the survey. The operation is in scope if the following are true:

- The person or operation owned or managed any forest or woodland in 2023.
- On December 31, 2023, the person or operation managed at least 1 acre of forest or woodland (regardless of ownership), 120 feet wide, and with at least 10% forest cover or where trees were removed, and trees will grow again on the land operated by the sampled operation (owned or rented).

**Question 1** if the operation meets all the conditions, then it is considered in-scope for the CPAMS forestry survey, and you would proceed to question 2 on page 2. If either of the conditions are not met, then you would go to Section 10 on page 27. Note the exclusion of Christmas tree farms, orchards, and landscape nurseries.

We will not be doing any substitution for the CPAMS survey, so if the operation has been turned over to someone else, collect the contact information and then conclude the survey.

**Question 2** further identifies the target of interest, Operators owning or managing less than 45,000 acres of forest or woodland. If answered 'yes', proceed to Section 10 on page 27. If answered 'no', continue to question 3.

**Question 3** continues to screen out Timberland Investment Management Organization (TIMO) or Timberland Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) operations. If answered 'yes', proceed to Section 10 on page 27. If answered 'no', proceed to Section 1 on page 3.

## Section 1 – Land Use

The purpose of Section 1 is to collect some data for all the acres operated in order to classify the operation later for comparison of operations of different sizes and types. This section contains questions about land use, ownership, forestry activities, proximity of forest land to primary residence, and whether the forest land is associated with a farm or ranch.

**Question 1** For total land owned or managed, report all land owned, rented or leased to get total acres owned or managed on December 31, 2023.

**Question 2** Of the total acreage reported in question 1, record the total forest or woodland acres that the respondent owns or manages on December 31, 2023.

**Question 3** for the acres reported in question 2, select ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to identify forest or woodlands rented or leased from others.

**Question 4** establishes the first year the respondent owned or managed forest or woodland. Record the year in question 4 as a four digit year, such as 2005, not just 05.

**Question 5** asks if during the last 10 years did the sampled person or operation earn any income from forestry activities. The income can be from timber harvesting, recreational purposes, or other non-timber products. Select all income sources that apply. If no income was earned from forestry activities, leave all boxes blank.

**Question 6** identifies the percentage of the household’s or operation’s gross income, on average, comes from the forest or woodland that is operated. Enter a 0 if no income was derived from the woodland or forested land on the operation. Do not count rental income for leasing out the woodland to another operation. This question will be used to compare survey results for respondents that get a majority of their income from their forestry operation vs another source.

**Question 7** identifies where the respondent’s primary residence location is in relation to their forest or woodland.

**Question 8** identifies, per NASS definition, if the respondent operates a farm or ranch. A farm or ranch is a place where, in most years, \$1,000 or more is earned from the sale of crops produced (other than forest products) or animals raised on that land. If answered ‘yes’, continue to question 8a. If answered ‘no’, proceed to Section 2 on page 4.

Question 8a identifies the where the farm or ranch headquarters is in relation to their forest or woodland. The primary residence and farm or ranch headquarters may be the same or different locations.



## Section 2 – Approach to Conservation

Conservation practices in this section refer to actions adopted to improve forest conditions, water quality, or wildlife habitat; or to reduce the risk of wildfire or pests and diseases.

**Question 1** table asks the respondent to classify their agreement with statements about their approach to using conservation practices.

**Question 2** asks the respondent to identify their goals when they use conservation practices. Multiple objectives may be checked. If you list an ‘other’ reason, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

## Section 3 – Technical Assistance and Forest Plans

**Question 1** is a screener used to determine if the person or operation has ever received technical assistance from any source for conservation on forest or woodland operated. If the answer is ‘yes’, continue. If the answer is ‘no’, then complete question 1a.

Question 1a are the three sources of technical assistance. Select all that apply.

Question 1b is a table of statements about technical assistance for forest or woodland. Record the respondent’s level of agreement.

Some questions include “N/A” as an option. The respondent should use this if they never sought or had technical assistance.

**Question 2** is a screener to determine use of a forest management or stewardship plan. If ‘yes’, continue to question 2a. If ‘no’ or ‘don’t know’, proceed to Section 4 on page 7.

Question 2a identifies the plan’s primary writer. Select only one. If you list an ‘other’ writer, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

Question 2b asks the source of funding for the forest management plan. Select all that apply. If you list ‘other’, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

Question 2c asks if the plan is being implemented.

## Section 4 – Forest Stand Improvement and Related Practices

Forest stand improvement generally involves removing certain trees to achieve a desired forest condition. Related practices include brush management (cutting or killing shrubs or other understory vegetation) and woody residue treatment (managing or removing the dead or cut down branches, treetops, or slash).

Example videos:

- Forest stand improvement <https://youtu.be/QZhOPQHdJM8>
- Woody residue treatment <https://youtu.be/zXCLkXOHxR8>

**Question 1** is a screener used to determine if the person or operation has ever done any forest stand improvement, brush management, or woody residue treatment at any time on the woodland and forest operated. If the answer is ‘yes’ to any activity, skip to Question 2 on page 8, but if the answer is ‘no’ to all activities, then complete the table 1a rating the respondent’s agreement with the statements about woody residue treatment. Record any additional reasons in 1b, then proceed to Section 5 on page 11.

**Question 2** asks about a series of potential objectives for engaging in forest stand improvement, brush management or woody residue treatment activities. The respondent can choose multiple objectives; ask each line and record the answer.

**Question 3** and all the sub-questions are about the first year that forest stand improvement, brush management or woody residue treatment was implemented.

Question 3 established the first year when forest stand improvement, brush management or woody residue treatment was used anywhere in the respondent’s operation. A 4-digit year, such as 2005, is required.

Question 3a asks for a percentage of the forest land where forest stand improvement, brush management, or woody residue treatment was used during the first year, not to exceed 100%.

Question 3b. is about technical or financial assistance that the respondent may have received in the first-year forest stand improvement, brush management, or woody residue treatment was used. If the respondent received technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received assistance to help defray the cost of adoption, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by the treatment (where financial assistance was received) in column three and the percentage of actual woody residue treatment costs covered by financial assistance in column four.

If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 3bi ask if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-federal source (e.g., state, local, private), enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 3c. If no financial assistance was received, leave 3bi blank.

Question 3c asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of conservation, financial, and other factors in deciding to use forest stand improvement or related strategies for the first time.

**Question 4** asks if the respondent has expanded the acreage where they were applied forest stand improvement or related practices since the first year it was used. If the respondent has expanded the any of the 3 practices to cover a larger percent of woodland after the year reported in question 3, check ‘yes’ and ask questions 4a and 4b. If the operator never expanded forest stand improvement, brush management, or woody residue treatment, answer ‘no’ and go to Section 5 on page 11.

Question 4a gathers information on technical and financial assistance received for expanding the portion of woodland covered by woody residue treatment after the initial year identified in question 3. If the respondent received additional technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received additional funds to help defray the cost of improvement, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by forest stand improvement, brush management, or woody residue treatment (where financial assistance was received) in column three and the percentage of actual practice costs (such as updates to machinery) covered by financial assistance in column four.

If no financial assistance was received for expanding forest stand improvement, brush management, or woody residue treatment, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 4ai ask if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-Federal source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 4b. If no financial assistance was received, leave 4ai blank.

Question 4b asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of factors in deciding to expand the percentage of woodland where forest stand improvement practices are used. If you list an ‘other’ reason, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

## Section 5 – Controlled (Prescribed) Burning

Controlled or prescribed burning is the routine practice of burning forest or woodlands that has been practiced for many years to promote healthy forest conditions and to help control the spread of weeds.

Example video: <https://youtu.be/T5sEaWKQK5A>

**Question 1** is a screener used to determine if the person or operation has ever done any controlled (prescribed) burning at any time on the woodland and forest operated. If the answer is ‘yes’, skip to Question 2 on page 12, but if the answer is ‘no’, then complete the table 1a rating the respondent’s agreement with the statements about controlled burning. Record any additional reasons in 1b. If you list an ‘other’ reason, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed, then go to Section 6 on page 15.

**Question 2** asks a series of potential reasons for engaging in controlled or prescribed burning. The respondent can choose multiple objectives so make sure to ask each line and record the answer. If you list an ‘other’ reason, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

**Question 3** establishes the first year when controlled burning was used anywhere in the respondent’s operation. A 4-digit year, such as 2005, is required.

Question 3a asks for a percentage of the forest land where controlled burning was used during the first year, not to exceed 100%.

Question 3b is about technical or financial assistance that the respondent may have received in the first year prescribed burning was used. If the respondent received technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received assistance to help defray the cost of adoption, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank.

Question 3bi asks if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-federal source (e.g., state, local, private), enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 3c. If no financial assistance was received, leave 3bi blank.

Question 3c asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of conservation, financial, and other factors in deciding to implement controlled burning.

**Question 4** asks if the respondent has expanded the percent of forest land that controlled burning was used since the first year it was introduced. If the respondent has expanded the controlled burning to cover a larger percent of woodland after the year reported in question 3, check ‘yes’ and ask questions 4a and 4b. If the operator never expanded controlled burning, answer ‘no’ and go to Section 6 on page 15.

Question 4a gathers information on technical and financial assistance received for expanding the portion of woodland where controlled burning was used after the initial year identified in question 3. If the respondent received additional technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received additional funds to help defray the cost of controlled burning, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by the controlled burning (where financial assistance was received) in column three and the percentage of actual controlled burning costs (such as hiring contractors) covered by financial assistance in column four.

If no financial assistance was received for expanding the controlled burning, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 4ai ask if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-Federal source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 4b. If no financial assistance was received, leave 4ai blank.

Question 4b asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of factors in deciding to expand the percentage of woodland where controlled burning is used. If you list an ‘other’ reason, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

**Question 5** asks the percentage of forest land on which controlled burning happens regularly (regular use is defined as having a schedule for burning or doing controlled burning on an as needed basis). If the response is ‘100%’, go to question 6 on page 14, otherwise ask question 5a.

Question 5a asks about a series of potential factors that limit the use of controlled burning. The respondent can choose multiple objectives so make sure to ask each line and record the answer. Note the last factor is ‘other’ and should be filled out if there is an additional reason that limits the use of controlled burning. If you list an ‘other’ reason, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

**Question 6** asks about the most recent year controlled/prescribed burning was used. If the respondent already reported using controlled burning on their operation in 2023, put 2023 in the cell and go to Section 6 on page 15. Do the same thing if they respond that they used controlled burning in 2024. If the last year that controlled burning was used is 2022 or earlier, ask question 6a.

Question 6a asks if they plan to implement controlled or prescribed burning in the next 3 years, check ‘yes’, and proceed to Section 6 on page 15 or ‘no’ and continue.

Question 6b is a table asking the respondents level of agreement with statements regarding their decision to stop using controlled or prescribed burning.

## Section 6 – Establishing Vegetation

Establishing vegetation is the process of planting desirable plants or enhancing the growth or natural regeneration of native plants. It includes tree planting, understory planting, and site preparation to improve the chances of the new trees or understory plants surviving.

Example videos:

- Tree/shrub establishment <https://youtu.be/eyh8USWjsRw>
- Site preparation [https://youtu.be/Oe2okziG\\_Ec](https://youtu.be/Oe2okziG_Ec)

**Question 1** asks if the respondent used three practices on their land to establish or enhance vegetation at any time on the woodland and forest operated. If the answer is ‘yes’ to any of the three, skip to Question 2 on page 16, but if the answer is ‘no’ to all, then complete the table 1a rating the respondent’s agreement with the statements about vegetation establishment. Record any additional reasons in 1b, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed, then proceed to Section 7 on page 19.

**Question 2** asks a series of potential reasons for establishing or enhancing forest vegetation. The respondent can choose multiple reasons, ask each one and record the answer. If you list an ‘other’ reason, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed.

**Question 3** all the sub-questions are targeting the first year, along with the decision to use establish or enhance vegetation for the first time.

Question 3 establishes the first-year establishment or enhancement vegetation was used anywhere in the respondent’s operation. A 4-digit year, such as 2005, is required. Question 3a asks for a percentage of the forest land where establishment or enhancement of vegetation was used during the first year, not to exceed 100%.

Question 3b is about technical or financial assistance that the respondent may have received in the first-year establishment or enhancement of vegetation was used. If the respondent received technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received assistance to help defray the cost of adoption, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by the establishment or enhancement of vegetation (where financial assistance was received) and the percentage of actual establishment or enhancement of vegetation costs covered by financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank.

Question 3bi asks if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-federal source (e.g., state, local, private), enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 3c. If no financial assistance was received, leave 3bi blank.

Question 3c asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of conservation, financial, and other factors in deciding to establish or enhance vegetation for the first time.

**Question 4** asks if the respondent has expanded the percent of forest land that has had establishment or enhancement of vegetation since the first year it was used. If the respondent has expanded the activity to cover a larger percent of woodland after the year reported in question 3, check ‘yes’ and ask questions 4a and 4b. If the operator never expanded this activity, answer ‘no’ and go to Section 7 on page 19.

Question 4a gathers information on technical and financial assistance received for expanding the portion of woodland covered by establishment or enhancement of vegetation after the initial year identified in question 3. If the respondent received additional technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received additional funds to help defray the cost of establishing or enhancing vegetation, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by the establishment or enhancement of vegetation (where financial assistance was received) and the percentage of actual costs for establishment or enhancement of vegetation (such as seed or machinery costs) covered by financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received for expanding the activities, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank.

Question 4ai asks if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-Federal source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 4b. If no financial assistance was received, leave 4ai blank.

Question 4b asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of factors in deciding to expand the percentage of woodland where establishing or enhancing of vegetation is used.

## Section 7 – Wildlife Habitat Management

**Question 1** asks a series of potential actions taken to protect or enhance wildlife habitat at any time on the forest or woodland. If the answer is ‘yes’ to any action, skip to Question 2 on page 20, but if the answer is ‘no’ to all actions listed, then complete the table 1a rating the respondent’s agreement with the statements about wildlife habitat management practices. Record any additional reasons in 1b, be concise with the answer since there is a limit to the number of characters allowed, then proceed to Section 8 on page 24.

Example video: <https://youtu.be/GVYZS2y2SQ>

**Question 2** asks about a series of potential objectives for engaging in wildlife habitat management. The respondent can choose multiple objectives; ask each one and record the answer.

**Question 3** and all the sub-questions are about the first year that wildlife habitat management was implemented. Question 3 establishes the first year when wildlife habitat management was used anywhere in the respondent’s operation. A 4-digit year, such as 2005, is required.

Question 3a. asks for a percentage of the forest land where wildlife habitat management was used during the first year, not to exceed 100%.

Question 3b is about technical or financial assistance that the respondent may have received in the first-year wildlife habitat management was used. If the respondent received technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received assistance to help defray the cost of adoption, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by the wildlife habitat management (where financial assistance was received) and the percentage of actual wildlife habitat management costs covered by financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank.

Question 3bi asks if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-federal source (e.g., state, local, private), enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 3c. If no financial assistance was received, leave 3bi blank.

Question 3c asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of conservation, financial, and other factors in deciding to practice wildlife habitat management for the first time.

**Question 4** asks if the respondent has expanded the percent of forest land that has wildlife habitat management practiced since the first year it was used. If the respondent has expanded the wildlife habitat management area to cover a larger percent of woodland after the year reported in question 3, check ‘yes’ and ask questions 4a and 4b. If the operator never expanded wildlife habitat management area, answer ‘no’ and go to Section 8 on page 24.

Question 4a gathers information on technical and financial assistance received for expanding the portion of woodland covered by the wildlife habitat management plan after the initial year identified in question 3. If the respondent received additional technical expertise or information for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received additional funds to help defray the cost of improvement, from any source, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by the wildlife habitat management (where financial assistance was received) and the percentage of actual wildlife habitat management costs covered by financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received for expanding wildlife habitat management area, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank.

Question 4ai asks if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from a non-Federal source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 4b. If no financial assistance was received, leave 4ai blank.

Question 4b asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of factors in deciding to expand the percentage of woodland where wildlife habitat management is practiced.

**Question 5** asks about the last year that wildlife habitat management was practiced. If the respondent already reported using wildlife habitat management practices on their operation in 2023, put 2023 in the cell and go to Section 8 on page 24. Do the same thing if they respond that they practiced wildlife habitat management in 2024.

If the last year that wildlife habitat management was practiced is 2022 or earlier, ask question 5a. If the respondent does not plan to practice wildlife habitat management at all in the next 3 years, check ‘no’ and ask 5b. If the respondent does plan to resume wildlife habitat management again in the next 3 years, check ‘yes’ for question 5a. and go to section 8 on page 24.

Question 5b asks the respondent to assess the importance of a series of factors in deciding to stop wildlife habitat management.



## Section 8 – Conservation Stewardship Program Participation

**Question 1** is a screener to determine if the sampled land (not the respondent) has ever been enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). If the answer is ‘yes’, continue by asking questions 1a. If the answer is ‘no’, the operation has never been enrolled in CSP, you will move on to Section 9 on page 25.

Question 1a is another screener to see if the sampled operation ever received any financial assistance through their enrollment in CSP for the enhancement of a practice. If ‘yes’, continue to question 1b. If the operation has not received any financial assistance mark ‘no’, then proceed to Section 9 on page 25.

Question 1b lists a series of enhancement practices, the respondent should indicate the number of acres under that practice and the percentage of actual enhancement cost covered by the CSP payment.

## Section 9 – Demographics

**Questions 1 – 3** are a series of questions that are to be used for classification purposes of the owner or manager. If there is more than one owner or manager involved with the operation, try to collect the demographics of the principal manager if possible. If there is no principal manager or more than one principal manager, then collect the demographics of the person who would be making a majority of the conservation practice decisions.

**Question 4** transitions to ask specifically about the legal status of the sampled forest or woodland. There are 7 options: individual, joint with husband or wife, joint with other family members or friends, family partnership/LLC/LLP, family trust of estate, corporation or business, grazing association/government facility/American Indian reservation, or other. Select only one ownership type.

Question 4a asked how many people are a part of the ownership, including the survey respondent.

## Section 10 – Conclusion

**Question 1** is to be filled out if the sampled operation is no longer in business and the business has been sold or turned over to someone else. Do your best to collect the operation name, operator’s name, address, and phone number. If possible, find out if the operation was in business on June 1, 2023.

**Question 2** can be comments that are related to anything on the survey, changes in the operation, or anything else that was communicated to you, such as reason for refusal.

At the end of the survey try and collect the operation email, the best phone number, the respondent’s name, and the respondent’s phone number if different from the operation phone number. Fill out the date in the correct month/day/year format. Conclude the survey by thanking the respondent for their time.